

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

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ASSISTANT MAJORITY WHIP



JOHN CULBERSON
7TH DISTRICT, TEXAS

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
1728 LONGWORTH BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-4307
202.225.2571
FAX 202.225.4381

DISTRICT OFFICE:
10000 MEMORIAL DRIVE, SUITE 620
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77024-3490
713.682.8828
FAX: 713.680.8070

INTERNET:
WWW.CULBERSON.HOUSE.GOV

May 17, 2004

The Honorable George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of my constituents, I respectfully request that you consider modifying your current policy on embryonic stem cell research.

I supported your decision in August of 2001 to permit federal funding for research on the five dozen embryonic stem cell lines that were already in existence, and I valued your careful deliberation on the issue considering the great deal of potential that lies in stem cell research.

Recently, scientists revealed that only 15 of the original 78 embryonic stem cell lines are still available for research. This problem could lead to the discontinuation of valuable research on potential treatment or cures for diseases like diabetes and Parkinson's at the National Institutes of Health, the failure to keep up with other nations also exploring embryonic stem cells, and difficulty in recruiting scientists that are attracted to this field.

Nearly 400,000 embryos derived from in vitro fertilization are currently frozen and destined to be destroyed. I believe these embryos are an ideal reserve, if donated with informed consent by both of the parents, to replenish the lines that have been lost, without crossing the moral line of unethically harvesting and destroying human embryos. As I see it, it is analogous to discarding the healthy heart of a deceased organ donor.

Because this issue is so sensitive and emotional, I am confident you will give it the attention it deserves. As our President, I trust your judgment implicitly as you direct this great country to its full potential.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Culberson".

John Culberson
Member of Congress

You are in our prayers every day